

REMARKS

In the March 31, 2004 Final Office Action, then pending claims (nos. 1-3, 6-9 and 12-13) were all rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Andersen *et al.* U.S. Patent No. 4,923,665 (Andersen '665) in view of Mitsuo U.S. Patent No. 5,534,292 (Mitsuo '292) and in further view of Japan 62197368A (JP '368). Both Mitsuo '292 and JP '368 were first cited in the Final Office Action.

Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-3, 6-9 and 12-13 as amended herein are patentable over these references according to the standards of patentability set forth in 35 U.S.C. §§102-103.

Specifically, according to the present invention as recited in claim 1, a molding of hydraulic composition is provided, prepared by press-molding a hydraulic composition, which comprises a hydraulic powder, a non-hydraulic powder having an average particle diameter of 1/10 or less of that of the hydraulic powder and a workability improver, to form a molded product while having a compression strength set at 5N/mm² or more, then curing the molded product by an autoclaving curing process under a saturated vapor pressure of 7.15 kg/cm² or higher and at a temperature of 165 °C or higher to form a cured product, then applying catalyst for electroless plating to the surface of the cured product, then forming an electroless-plated coating thereon, and then providing a metallic coating on the cured product by an electroplating process.

In fact, in all the claims as amended herein, the autoclaving curing process is recited as being carried out under a limited condition, namely, a saturated vapor pressure of 7.15kg/cm^2 or higher and at a temperature of 165°C or higher. The autoclaving curing process under this condition achieves a molding of hydraulic composition having a high compression strength. Also, not only is higher compression strength achieved but also workability when applied as a mechanical part can be significantly improved. When the thus obtained molding of hydraulic composition is machined by a lathe or the like, it is not likely to cause chattering, pitching or the like, while it is possible that the thus produced molding has a remarkably smooth surface.

By contrast, neither Andersen '665 nor Mitsuo '292 disclose any conditions applied to the autoclaving curing process. Moreover, Andersen '665 and Mitsuo '292 neither teach nor suggest that the molding of hydraulic composition produced by the autoclaving curing process exhibits an excellent mechanical workability.

Further, in all the claims as amended herein, prior to the autoclaving curing process, the compression strength is set at 5N/mm^2 or more. If the autoclaving curing process is carried out before the compression strength is raised to 5N/mm^2 or more, it may cause explosion of the molding having the composition (as recited, e.g., in claim 1) during the autoclaving, in which case it is difficult to produce the molding of hydraulic composition of the present invention and hence the compression strength, workability or the like may be deteriorated. Andersen '665 and Mitsuo '292 neither teach nor suggest any conditions

on the compression strength of the molding to be set before the start of the autoclaving curing process.

Accordingly, all of the claims as amended herein clearly distinguish from both Andersen '665 and Mitsuo '292, and no combination of any sort of those references could render the claimed invention obvious. Therefore, all of claims 1-3, 6-9 and 12-13 are allowable over the references. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

The undersigned will be in contact with the Examiner to arrange for an interview regarding this case. The undersigned wishes to extend his thanks to the Examiner in advance for the courtesy of such a meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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August 30, 2004

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